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ABSTRACT

Community colleges can serve teacher aides through providing low-cost opportunities to continue their education and to take courses with immediate application to their employment. Although initial employment positions require no more than a high school diploma, teacher aides are getting additional training through local certificate programs and/or through the college's general education programs. San Bernardino City Schools created three non-certified positions: classroom aide, tutorial assistant, and community aide. It is felt that emphasis in student recruitment and program planning should be on minority and disadvantaged groups. Community colleges might also offer teacher preparation courses for those students who plan to teach after receiving their B.A., but who wish to work in the field in the meantime. Three possible courses are: introduction to education, practicum in school procedures and resources, and field experience in education. (CA)

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THE PREPARATION OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL TEACHER AIDES IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By Roger Schmidt

In the past few years several positions have been created in the teaching field for persons who have not obtained the bachelor's degree. The appearance of this type of employment opportunity has resulted in the adoption of teacher aide programs and teacher preparation programs in a number of junior colleges. There is certainly a need for such a program. Many school districts already offer a variety of positions. For example, the San Bernardino City Schools created three non-certificated positions related to the teaching process. One of the most interesting positions is that of Classroom Aide. The Classroom Aide works under the supervision of a teacher or principal. He must familiarize himself with the teacher's plans, curriculum guides and other materials. The Classroom Aide may work with individuals or small groups of children. The Aide may help in keeping library materials in order, creating an attractive room environment, helping with audio-visual aids, and performing some clerical work.

A second position is that of Tutorial Assistant which provides for the tutoring of children to remedy deficiencies in academic areas such as reading, language, and mathematics. Tests are given the prospective tutors in the area of their tutoring specialties.

The third position is that of Community Aide. The Community Aide works under the supervision of school principals and serves as a liaison between the school and the community. He assists primarily in enhancing understanding of community problems and attitudes with reference to the education of disadvantaged children. Other school districts have positions with different titles but with similar duties.

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Many teacher Aides are interested in continuing their education. They work from 3-4 hours a day and then take a 6-9 unit load in the other half of the school day. Several of those now employed are persons from culturally different backgrounds

who are genuinely interested in continuing their education but who must be employed while doing so. Their experiences have contributed to their own self-esteem and have whetted their appetites for more education and increased responsibilities. Community colleges should survey those already employed to determine the hours most appropriate to scheduling courses for them and the types of courses relevant to their situation. It is often possible to secure federal or state grants to provide monies for the students participating in the program and for materials and instructional costs.

Community colleges are ideally designed to help in the preparation of such pre-professionals. The positions generally require no more than a high school diploma for initial employment. This means that educationally the teacher aides can best be served by low cost opportunities to continue their education and by courses which have some immediate application to their employment. Needless to say, of all the segments of higher education, the community college is the most economical.

Presently, teacher aides are being prepared in the community colleges either through the development of local certificate programs or through the college's general education program. In any case, teacher aide certificate programs should be encouraged. Local school districts can support such certification by tying salary advancements to continued schooling. The advantages of better prepared teacher aides are obvious. Pre-professional positions will probably continue and eventually some state standardization occur. Community colleges should have a prominent role to play in the preparation of teacher aides rather than leaving the task to the four year colleges.

If statewide certification is adopted it would seem wise to retain the essential openness of the position by requiring no more than a high school diploma or equivalent. This openness makes it easier to recruit aides from the culturally different or economically disadvantaged. A summer educational program might precede the aide's

actual teaching experience in order to provide better preparation while preserving flexibility in hiring. Community colleges could offer summer programs much as the university system has through its intern programs.

The junior college could develop a one year certificate program geared to the skills and insights required by the positions (Classroom Aide, Community Aide, and Tutorial Assistant). A one year certificate program might include a course in the utilization of instructional media with special emphasis on the construction of audiovisual aids and development of skills in using the mimeograph, ditto, tape recorder, motion picture and slide projector. Courses could also be included in games for primary school children (1-8), introduction to psychology and sociology, child and adolescent psychology, studies of American minorities, ethnic relations, English, speech, and reading problems. An introduction to education course would give an overview of the field. Most of the work for a one year certificate program would be transferable to senior colleges and thus applicable to a bachelor's degree. All of the work would be applicable to the junior college associate of arts degree.

As our educational system moves in the direction of seriously implementing a multi-cultural educational system there will be an increased demand for those who are rich in the heritage of the various minorities. The preparation of teacher aides should reflect the pressing demands in the community for a multi-cultured school curriculum and for persons who are sensitive and educated in the problems of the culturally different. This emphasis on cultural differences with implications for decentralization of the schools and increased community involvement is consistent with a free society's commitment to respect individual uniqueness and self determination. Community colleges need to demonstrate some leadership in this nationwide concern. In doing so, we must be committed not only to a preservation and respect for our cultural uniqueness (Afro-American, Mexican-American and Indian-American subcultures) but should also remain committed to the view that a broad liberal

education which is not narrowly provincial should remain part of all teacher preparation programs.

In order to make a really successful teacher aide program, considerable coordination and cooperation is necessary. Head Start, public schools, teacher organizations and welfare departments need to be consulted and their help enlisted. Such groups can be instrumental in the recruitment of students, the establishment of needs and the identification of the type of educational experience most relevant for the positions involved. Perhaps a meaningful certificate program can be worked out with district schools which would involve employment, salary advancement, and increased opportunities. It would seem wise to make an effort to bring prospective students, already involved in the field of education, into the planning and development of the program.

For the most part, the teacher preparation curriculum can draw on existing courses that are already recommended for pre-teachers. Because there are now several positions that allow persons to teach or to be involved as teacher's aides before the reception of a bachelor's degree, it is appropriate that community colleges develop a few courses which are ordinarily deferred until later. Students seeking employment in the public schools before receiving their bachelor's would profit from a general introduction to education, some exposure to school procedures and resources and some credit for supervised teaching or teaching aide experience.

Perhaps three such courses would suffice:

Introduction to Education: A general introduction to the field of education. Specific topics include a survey of the opportunities in education, the characteristics of the role of the teacher and administrators, professional ethics, learning and motivation, the importance of the student-teacher relationship and the functions and forces operating on modern schools.

3 Units

Practicum in School Procedures and Resources: A study of the procedures used in the classroom including an introduction to the school plant, schedules, attendance reports, records, clerical functions, scoring and recording of objective tests, papers and assignments. An introduction to the various instructional media used in the modern classroom including construction of audiovisual aids, development of skill in using mimeograph, ditto, tape recorder, motion picture and slide projector. Some familiarity with television should also be expected.

3 Units 2 hours lecture
3 hours laboratory per week

Field Experience In Education: An actual job experience in a classroom situation. Students receiving credit would be supervised by a master teacher and the college coordinator of the teacher education program. This course would provide the student with some credit for his teaching experience.

6 Units

The following is a suggested curriculum for a Teaching Aide Certificate Program requiring the completion of one year of college work. The certificate proposal assumes that most of the teacher's aides will be in teaching situations involving ethnic minorities.

TEACHER AIDE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Fall	Units	Spring	Units
Intro. to Education	3	Practicum in School Procedures and Resources	3
Intro. to Psychology	3	History of American Minorities	3
Intro. to Sociology	3	Child and Adolescent Psychology	3
English	3	Ethnic Relations	3
Recreation and Games	2	Field Experience in Education	3
Typing	2		
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